

get
ready
QUEENSLAND

SEVERE WEATHER SAFETY GUIDE

Get ready for heatwaves, floods, storms,
and cyclones before disaster strikes.

getready.qld.gov.au

SUNCORP 

PROUD PARTNERS OF
GET READY QUEENSLAND & SES QUEENSLAND



CONTACT NUMBERS

For life threatening emergencies.....	000
State Emergency Service (SES)	132 500
Crime Stoppers	1800 333 000
Community Recovery Hotline.....	1800 173 349
Electrical emergencies.....(Energex)	13 19 62
..... (Ergon Energy)	13 16 70
Health and hospital information.....	13 43 25 84
National Relay Services (TTY/Voice Calls/Speak and Read)	1800 555 677
SMS Relay (Text and Listen)	0423 677 767
Road traffic and travel information	13 19 40
Animal and wildlife emergencies – RSPCA	1300 264 625
National translation and interpreter service.....	13 14 50
Marine Rescue Queensland	(on land) 000
.....	(on water) RADIO VHF 16

LOCAL COUNCIL CONTACT NUMBER:

LOCAL COUNCIL DISASTER DASHBOARD:

This guide was developed thanks to support from the Queensland Government's Get Ready Queensland program.
For more information, visit getready.qld.gov.au



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Queensland is Australia's most disaster impacted state.

Natural disasters can happen anytime and without much warning. They can have lasting effects on people, their property and their possessions.

It's a good idea to be ready before disaster strikes. There are 3 steps to Get Ready for severe weather in Queensland.

1. Understand your risk

2. Make a plan

3. Pack a kit

This booklet will help you and your family understand these events and be prepared.

UNDERSTAND YOUR RISK

Severe weather events including bushfires, severe storms, cyclones, and floods are part of life in Queensland.

Knowing which events might impact your family or household is vital to being prepared.

Talk to your local council about severe weather risks in your area. Find out:

- » if there is a history of severe weather in the area
- » what types of disasters might affect your area
- » when those disasters could occur
- » how severe they could be
- » how you might be affected.

Your neighbours, people in your community and your local council will be a great source of local knowledge.

Getting ready will help reduce the impact of a disaster on you, your loved ones, home, family, finances and business.

Which severe weather events could affect you?



☐ Severe storm



☐ Flooding



☐ Cyclone



☐ Heatwave



☐ Bushfire



MAKE A PLAN

Make a household emergency plan so that everyone in your household knows what to do if the weather turns bad.

Use the enclosed plan or go to Get Ready Queensland, getready.qld.gov.au, where there are a range of planning tools to suit your family's needs.



Make your digital emergency plan
plan.getready.qld.gov.au

Make your plan with your family and, if you need help, talk to a friend or neighbour.

When making your plan, think about whether you may need to evacuate. Staying at home is usually the best option, but if you need to evacuate, go early. Consider where will you go, what will you need, and how much will you be able to take.

And don't forget to make a plan for your pets.

Home preparations and maintenance

All severe weather events are different, but you can prepare your home now.

Use the checklist below to get ready.

Home preparations

- ☐ Identify the strongest room in your home to shelter in during storms and cyclones.
- ☐ Know where and how to turn off the main supply for water, power, gas and solar panels and batteries. Your system's installer or manufacturer can help if you have questions about how.
- ☐ Consider any arrangements you will need to make for pets or livestock.
- ☐ Make sure your car is fuelled and ready to go in case you need to evacuate.
- ☐ Caravans and boats should be secured and ready for use.

HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PLAN

Household names and phone numbers

If severe weather comes, stay connected. Add phone numbers for people in your home:

Name:

Phone:

Community

Friends and neighbours can help you during bad weather. Add their information below and talk to them about your plan:

Contact 1 Name:

Phone:

Contact 2 Name:

Phone:

Contact 3 Name:

Phone:

Contact 4 Name:

Phone:

Contact 5 Name:

Phone:

Important items

Write down important details like animal information and your car registration number:

Item

Important info, like type and registration number:

Doctor	Name:	Phone:
Chemist or pharmacist	Name:	Phone:
Other (such as specialist)	Name:	Phone:
Other	Name:	Phone:

Important medicines

Medicine: Who it is for: Dosage:	Medicine: Who it is for: Dosage:
Medicine: Who it is for: Dosage:	Medicine: Who it is for: Dosage:

Electricity (power) Phone: Account Number: How and where to turn off at home:	Gas Phone: Account Number: How and where to turn off at home:
Telephone Phone: Account Number:	Water Phone: Account Number: How and where to turn off at home:
Internet Phone: Account Number: WiFi password:	Bank Phone: Account Number: BSB:
Real Estate Phone: Account Number:	

Home maintenance

- ☐ Keep your roof in good condition and check it regularly.
- ☐ Keep gutters and downpipes clear so water can drain away quickly.
- ☐ Trim trees and overhanging branches and keep yard clear of debris and garden waste (be careful of any overhead powerlines).
- ☐ Check and fix any corrosion, rotten timber, termite infestations and loose fittings.
- ☐ Repair any broken seals around windows.
- ☐ Ensure you have good access to water around your house.
- ☐ If renting, alert your landlord or property manager of any maintenance issues.

Insurance

Preparing for disasters includes making sure you have the right insurance so that you are financially protected.

- ☐ Check your home, contents, vehicle, and life insurance policies are up to date and provide suitable coverage.
- ☐ Know what your home and contents policy covers, how each disaster is defined, and how much the policy will cover.
- ☐ Call your insurer and ask a few questions to make sure you're properly covered.



Watch for the warnings

Stay informed and connected during a natural disaster to keep you and your loved ones safe.

There are simple steps you can take to be prepared for the people you care about, yourself, and your community.

- » Have plans for emergencies and watch for warnings.
- » If someone relies on you, or you need someone's help in emergencies, check in regularly and have plans in place.
- » If a heightened warning is issued, know what to do to keep your family, friends and pets safe.

Sign up and save relevant alerts and warnings, resources and services on your smart phone, tablet, and computer. If internet and phone services are down, use local radio.

Local governments will keep you up-to-date on everything you need to know including evacuation centre openings and locations, river heights, road conditions and closures, power and phone outages.

Where to find warnings



Weather warnings come from the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and help you make informed decisions to prepare before severe weather strikes. Visit the website, **www.bom.gov.au**, or download the free BoM Weather app to find current weather warnings.

Visit your local council's online Disaster Dashboard, **getready.qld.gov.au/find-your-local-council**, to sign up for local weather alerts and to access additional information about how you can Get Ready.



You can find warnings for different hazards online:

Flood, severe weather, and cyclone

- » Your local government Disaster Dashboard
- » **disaster.qld.gov.au/warnings**
- » official social media channels, including Queensland Police Service at **facebook.com/QueenslandPolice** and, **x.com/qldpolice**

Bushfire

- » **fire.qld.gov.au/current-incidents**
- » official social media channels, including Queensland Fire Department at **facebook.com/QldFireDepartment** and, **x.com/QldFireDept**

Extreme heat

- » **health.qld.gov.au/newsroom/alerts**

Your local radio station will broadcast warnings for most incidents.



- » For up-to-date information about roadworks on Queensland's state-controlled network, including current restrictions and closures, call **13 19 40** or visit qldtraffic.qld.gov.au

Do you know what to do when you receive an emergency alert or hear a weather warning?

Emergency alerts are sent to people in places where extreme weather is happening and require people to act. They are sent as an official text message from the Queensland State Disaster Coordination Centre: +61 444 444 444. You do not need to register to receive an emergency alert.

If you receive an emergency alert, you should take immediate action to protect you and your loved ones.

In Queensland, natural disaster warnings follow the Australian Warning System.

Official warnings are issued when heat, a bushfire, flood, severe weather, or cyclone has the potential to threaten life or property.

There are three warning levels – Advice, Watch and Act, and Emergency Warning.

ADVICE

You are not in danger but you need to be alert and listen for warnings in case the hazard gets worse or closer to you.



WATCH and ACT

You could be in danger because conditions are changing. You need to act now to be safe. Follow your emergency plan.



EMERGENCY WARNING

You are in danger and need to act immediately to be safe. Follow the warning actions to survive.



The most important thing to remember is to listen to warnings, consider what you need to do, and follow directions and instructions from emergency services.

PACK A KIT

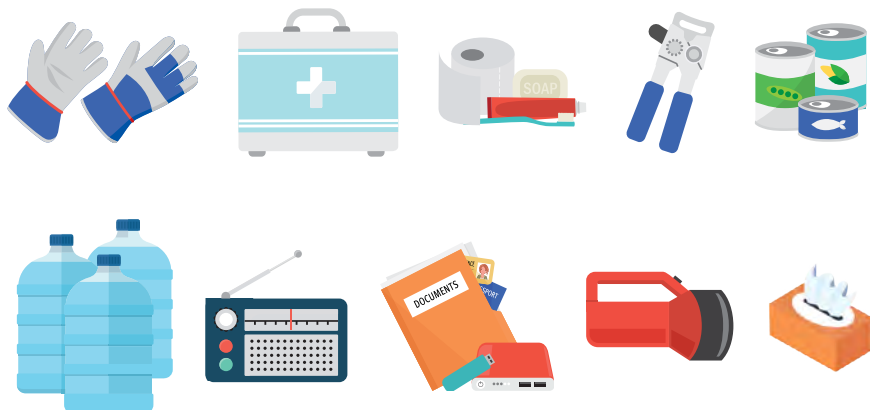
Prepare an emergency kit and store it somewhere safe. Severe weather can cause the loss of electricity, water and gas, and road closures mean you could be isolated and unable to get to shops for supplies.

An emergency kit should have enough essential supplies for every member of the household to be isolated for at least three days.

Keep your kit in a waterproof container in an accessible location. Check your kit at least once a year to make sure supplies are fresh and safe to use.

Use the following checklist to make your kit today.

- ☐ Water for three days – a minimum of 10 litres of drinking water in total per person.
- ☐ Non-perishable food for three days.
- ☐ Gas powered stove – with spare canister.
- ☐ Cooking and kitchen equipment – pans, plates, cups, cutlery, cooking knife, zip lock bags, plastic containers and can opener.
- ☐ Baby supplies – formula (check expiry date) and a bottle. Have enough food, nappies and wipes for at least three days.
- ☐ Pet supplies – dry food, water and feeding bowls.
- ☐ Thick work gloves and disposable rubber gloves.
- ☐ Rubbish bags.
- ☐ First aid kit and face masks.
- ☐ Essential medication – if possible, include a week's supply of prescription and over the counter medication.



- ☐ Essential toiletries – toilet paper, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, personal hygiene products, sunscreen, insect repellent, tissues and hand sanitiser.
- ☐ Important documents – paper copies or scans saved to a USB. Drivers licence, insurance policies (home, contents, vehicles, life), passports, legal documents (property deed, wills etc.), birth and marriage certificates.
- ☐ Mobile phone, chargers and power bank.
- ☐ Torch – with spare batteries for at least three days use.
- ☐ Battery powered AM/FM radio – with spare batteries for at least three days use.
- ☐ Sunglasses and/or safety glasses.
- ☐ Emergency whistle.
- ☐ Wrench, pliers, screwdriver – to help turn off power, water and gas supplies if needed.
- ☐ Tarpaulin and ropes.
- ☐ Spare glasses and hearing aid batteries – if needed and possible.
- ☐ Spare clothes – clean underwear, changes of clothes, waterproof jackets and sun hats for all the family.
- ☐ Safety knife – a safety knife is a useful tool during and after a disaster.
- ☐ Bedding – sleeping bags or warm blankets, camping mattress.
- ☐ Spare cash – in case payment systems are down.
- ☐ Things to keep you and the kids entertained – books, pack of cards, glow sticks.



Evacuation kit

In an emergency, you may need to leave your home very quickly and at short notice.

Have an evacuation kit prepared for when you need to leave in a hurry.

Use the checklist below to pack your emergency evacuation kit.

Add any extra items you may need.

- ☐ First aid kit including important medication
- ☐ Important documents
- ☐ Thick gloves
- ☐ Torch
- ☐ Food for three days
- ☐ Spare batteries
- ☐ Hand sanitiser
- ☐ Bathroom items
- ☐ Can opener
- ☐ Battery powered radio
- ☐ Tissues
- ☐ Mobile phone, chargers and power pack
- ☐ Water for three days
- ☐ Nappies and baby food
- ☐ Spare cash
- ☐ Spare clothes
- ☐ Bedding
- ☐ Valuables
- ☐ Face mask
- ☐ Books and games

Other:

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

HEATWAVE

Heatwaves are the deadliest natural hazard in Queensland.

A heatwave is when the maximum and the minimum temperatures are unusually hot over a three-day period at a location, taking into consideration the location's climate and past weather.

In Australia, extreme heat events are responsible for more deaths than other natural disasters.

Heatwaves can impact anyone, including our pets and animals.

With Queensland experiencing more and longer heatwaves, it's important to understand how to stay safe during these conditions.

Early signs of heat stress include rising body temperature, dry mouth and eyes, headache, shortness of breath, and vomiting.

A few simple steps can help you stay safe during a heatwave.

- » Keep your air-conditioner serviced.
- » Drink water regularly and avoid caffeine.
- » Wear sunscreen and a hat.
- » Avoid the heat where possible and take frequent rest breaks in the shade.
- » Stay as cool as possible.



SEVERE STORM

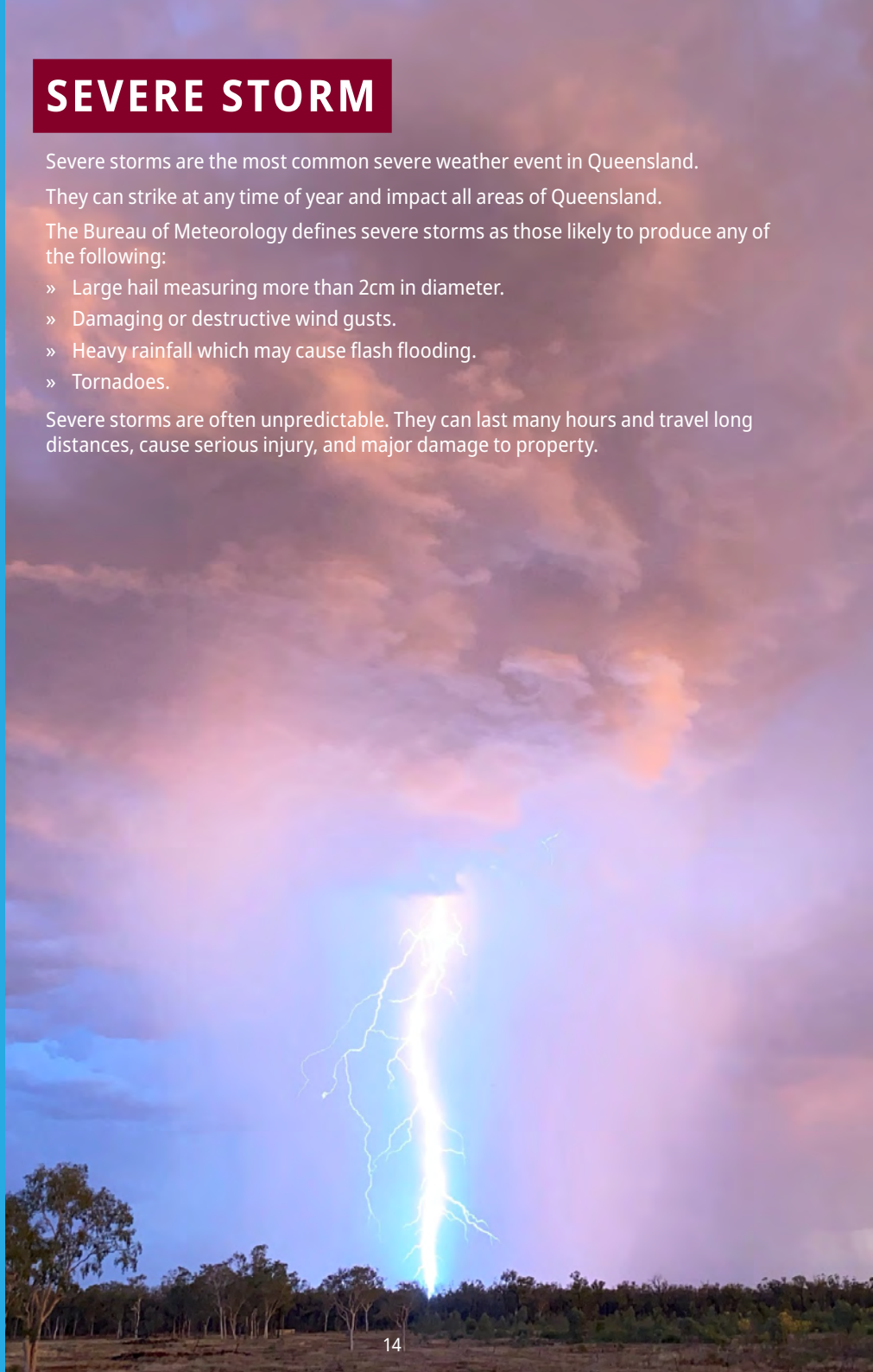
Severe storms are the most common severe weather event in Queensland.

They can strike at any time of year and impact all areas of Queensland.

The Bureau of Meteorology defines severe storms as those likely to produce any of the following:

- » Large hail measuring more than 2cm in diameter.
- » Damaging or destructive wind gusts.
- » Heavy rainfall which may cause flash flooding.
- » Tornadoes.

Severe storms are often unpredictable. They can last many hours and travel long distances, cause serious injury, and major damage to property.



Preparing for a storm

- » Tune in to official warnings.
- » Check family and neighbours are aware of the warning.
- » Move indoors, bringing children and pets with you.
- » Have your emergency kit nearby.
- » Park vehicles under cover or away from trees, power lines and creeks, and cover with firmly tied down blankets to minimise hail damage.
- » Secure outdoor equipment, rubbish, chemicals and poisons.
- » Unplug electrical items, aerials and computer equipment to avoid damage from a power surge.
- » Close windows, shutters and curtains.

During a storm

- » Stay inside, away from windows, external doors and skylights until the storm has passed.
- » If you lose power, note the time and check your home electrical safety switch to see if it is a wider power outage.
- » If driving, stop clear of trees, powerlines and creeks, and, if possible, park in a sheltered carpark.
- » Never drive through floodwater. If it's flooded, forget it.



Monitor emergency alerts at **www.qld.gov.au/alerts**, to stay informed during a severe storm.

CYCLONE

Tropical cyclones are powerful weather systems, and develop from low pressure systems which form over warm, tropical waters. Generally, they intensify over several days before making landfall.

Cyclones produce very strong winds that rotate clockwise around a calm centre (the 'eye') and heavy rain, both of which can cause significant damage.

Destructive winds, heavy rainfall, flash flooding, and storm surges caused by tropical cyclones impact Queensland communities regularly. After making landfall, cyclones may become rain depressions which may impact communities which are a long distance from the place of landfall.

There are five categories that describe the severity of tropical cyclones.

1

Minimal house damage.

Damage to some crops, trees and caravans. Boats may drag moorings.

2

Minor house damage.

Significant damage to trees and caravans. Damage to some crops. Risk of power failure.

3

Some roof and structural damage to buildings.

Some caravans destroyed. Power failure likely.

4

Significant roof and structural damage.

Caravans destroyed. Dangerous airborne debris. Power failure.

5

Extremely dangerous with widespread destruction.

Preparing for a cyclone:

- » Tune in to official warnings.
- » Have your emergency kit and your grab and go bag nearby.
- » Put fuel in your car and park it in a sheltered area so you are ready to evacuate if necessary.
- » Secure large items such as boats, caravans, trailers, rainwater tanks, outdoor furniture, shade sails and any loose material around your home.
- » Fasten all cyclone screens and board up any exposed windows, doors and seep holes.
- » Close windows. Securely tape plastic sheeting to the inside of windows to keep wind-driven rain out of your home.
- » Prepare for the loss of essential services – water, electricity, gas and internet. Fill containers with drinking water.
- » Check in with family, friends and neighbours.
- » If instructed, turn off all electricity (including solar), gas, and water supplies.

During a cyclone:

- » Cyclones sound like a roaring train or jet engine.
- » Skies will darken and there will be strong winds and heavy rain.
- » Strong winds turn loose objects into missiles that can damage your home.
- » Stay inside and prepare to be there for many hours.
- » Go to the place where you planned to shelter in your home and stay away from windows and glass doors.
- » Wear shoes and clothing that provide adequate protection.
- » Stay tuned to your information and warnings channels.
- » If the building begins to break up, shelter under a strong table, bench or heavy mattress.
- » Beware the calm eye of the cyclone. The second part of the cyclone has stronger, more intense winds and returns quickly.
- » Stay inside until you have received official advice that it is safe to go outside.

FLOODING

Flooding is part of life in Queensland.

Floods pose a serious threat to the safety of you and your loved ones and can cause significant damage to buildings and infrastructure. We can't prevent floods from happening, but we can take steps to be prepared and reduce the impact of flooding.

Contact your local council to ask about the flood risk for your property.

Understanding the type of flooding you are likely to experience will help you prepare. And remember, even if your home is not flooded, you could still be isolated.

Main types of floods:

- » Riverine flooding – when creeks and rivers burst their banks following heavy rain events.
- » Flash flooding – where there is a lot of rain in a short period of time such as during a storm. It can happen anywhere without warning.
- » Coastal flooding – like storm surge and storm tides, mainly caused by cyclones.



Know your flood risk:

- » Know what the flood risk is to the property where you live.
- » Could you be isolated by a flood?
- » Where would you go if you needed to evacuate?
- » Check your planned evacuation route to ensure it's safe and find out when you should leave.
- » Check the flood risk for other property locations that are important to you e.g. schools, work, and relatives.

Preparing for a possible flood:

- » Tune in to official warnings.
- » Have your emergency kit and your grab and go bag nearby.
- » Put fuel in your car and park it in a sheltered area so you are ready to evacuate if necessary.
- » Secure loose material around your home and yard to prevent them being carried away by floodwater.
- » Stack belongings onto benches and tables above the expected flood level. Place electrical equipment on top.
- » Place sandbags in appropriate places around your home to help reduce the impact of flood damage. Don't forget the drains and the toilet.
- » Move pets and livestock to safety.
- » Store all fuels, poisons and chemicals well above the expected flood level.
- » If water is entering your property, turn off all electricity (including solar), gas and water supplies.

If you need to evacuate:

- » If it's flooded, forget it.
- » In Queensland, driving into floodwater is the number one cause of flood-related deaths. Never drive, ride, walk, or swim in floodwater.
- » Water can be deeper and faster flowing than it appears.
- » Flood water can wash away road surfaces leaving deep holes and uneven surfaces. It can hide debris, rubbish, dangerous animals, sewage and other contaminants.
- » If your path is blocked by floodwater, back up and find another travel route.



Find out more at getready.qld.gov.au

Riverine flooding

The most common reason for flooding is when rivers and creeks cannot contain the excess water from heavy rain. Water can travel overland and affect rivers downstream, causing widespread damage. Even if your home is not flooded, you could still be isolated.

Flash flooding

Flash flooding happens where there is a lot of rain in a short period of time. It can happen anywhere, at anytime, and often without a lot of warning.

Flash flooding is extremely dangerous. The floodwater is powerful and fast moving.

Flash floodwater can wash away drain grates and manhole covers, leaving huge holes at the side and in the middle of the road.

These holes can be hidden under floodwater and can trap a car wheel or even someone getting out of a car.

Just because a road hasn't flooded in the past, doesn't mean it won't flood in the future. Don't rely on what you have seen before.

The best way to avoid driving through floodwater is to prepare to stay safe. Have an alternative plan in place so you don't have to get on the roads during severe wet weather.

Coastal flooding

80 per cent of Queenslanders live in coastal areas, at risk of coastal flooding (or inundation) due to tidal changes, storms, cyclones, and tsunami.

Check with your local council if coastal flooding could be a danger to your home and family.

Storm surge

A storm surge is when the normal seawater level rises, caused by intense low-pressure systems, including cyclones. Strong winds will push large waves towards the coastline, causing water to swamp the landscape, sometimes for kilometres inland.

The wind and pounding waves are a severe threat to lives and can cause significant damage to buildings and infrastructure.

Storm tide

The danger is significantly higher when the storm surge arrives during high tide, known as a storm tide.

Follow the advice of local authorities. You need to be ready to leave your home quickly. Evacuation may be necessary based on predicted wind speeds and water levels. If you need to evacuate, the safest option is to leave early.

Tsunami

A tsunami is a series of powerful and fast-moving waves produced during a large ocean disturbance, such as an earthquake, underwater landslide or volcanic eruption. They are rare, but they can occur with very little warning and can be very destructive.

If you feel the ground move, see the ocean draw back, hear a loud roaring sound, or see a wave coming, a tsunami may be on its way. The water may not recede before the tsunami strikes so don't rely on the drawback as the only sign. You should listen for alerts and sirens but don't wait for them.

Act quickly.

Official warnings are issued by the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre and advertised through media and emergency services. There are three warning levels.

- **No threat**

An undersea earthquake has been detected, but a tsunami has not formed, or the tsunami poses no threat.

- **Marine and immediate foreshore threat**

Potentially dangerous rips, waves and strong ocean currents in the marine environment. Some localised overflow onto the immediate foreshore is possible.

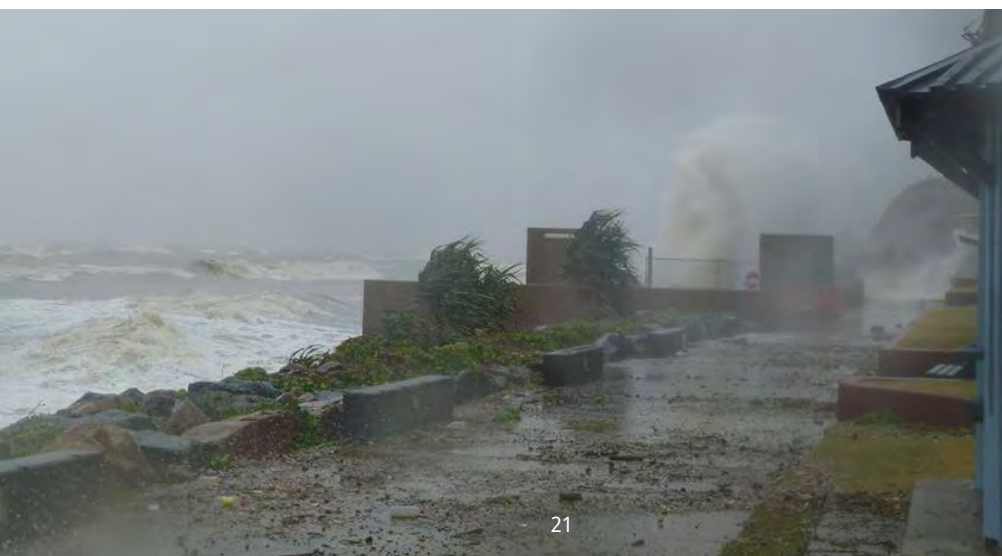
- **Land inundation threat**

Warning for low-lying coastal areas of major flooding, dangerous rips, waves and strong ocean currents.

If you are near the beach when a warning is issued, immediately move inland or to higher ground. If you can't move inland, seek shelter in the upper levels of a sturdy multistorey building.

Listen to your local radio station for information, warnings and advice.

Follow the instructions of emergency services and do not return to the area until you are advised it is safe.



SUPPORT

Returning home after an event

After a disaster

Personal hardship assistance and housing assistance may be available for affected residents.

If you're experiencing emotional stress or personal financial hardship following an event, contact your local emergency relief provider or counselling service or call the Community Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349 for help.

A range of support and guidance services are also available for all Queenslanders to help recovery.



Visit getready.qld.gov.au/after-disaster for more information.

Returning home:

- » Only return home when authorities have declared the area safe.
- » Check your home and property for damage.
- » Take photographs of any damage as proof and contact your insurance provider.
- » Clean up debris around your home.
- » Check with your local government for advice on disposing of green waste and other materials such as asbestos.
- » Check in with your family and neighbours.

Staying safe:

- » Listen to local radio and check official websites for updated information or instructions.
- » If floodwater has entered your home, keep electricity, gas, and appliances turned off until they have been checked by a licensed electrician.
- » If you have solar panels that are damaged, do not turn on your power supply until they have been checked by a licensed electrician.
- » Avoid any downed power lines.
- » Be careful of metal objects that may be in contact with downed power lines.
- » Contact your energy provider or call Triple Zero (000) to report the danger and warn others to keep clear.
- » Wear protective clothing to avoid contact with contaminated surfaces and floodwater.
- » Use a torch to inspect buildings.
- » Wash surfaces that have been affected by floodwaters with an antibacterial cleaner.

- » Throw away any food and medications that have been spoiled due to power outages or floodwater.
- » Only drink bottled or boiled water until the normal water supply has been declared safe by health authorities.
- » Watch out for scared or agitated pets that may be hiding in unusual locations.
- » Check for wildlife such as snakes, spiders, rodents, and other animals which may have taken refuge in your home during the flood.
- » Never drive, ride, swim, or walk in floodwater. If it's flooded, forget it.
- » Do not go sightseeing. This can delay emergency services and increase the possibility of accidents.
- » Only travel through affected areas if necessary.

Further assistance:

- » Contact the State Emergency Service (SES) on 132 500 if you need emergency assistance with damage to your property.
- » For life-threatening emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).



SUPPORT

State Emergency Service (SES)

SES members can carry out temporary repairs to help people protect themselves and their property from further damage in circumstances such as:

- » damaged walls, windows or roofs
- » fallen trees blocking access
- » rising flood water
- » storm damage that may be a threat to life or property.

Make sure you inform the SES of any hazards they may face, such as asbestos and solar panels.

To organise permanent repairs, contact your insurance provider or a private contractor.



To request help from the SES:

- » Lodge a request on the **SES Assistance QLD App**
- » Call **132 500**, or
- » Lodge a request at **132500.qld.gov.au** (scan QR code below)



Demand on the SES during a severe weather event is huge and can lead to long wait times.

The SES prioritises requests for assistance based on the information provided.

Your local SES Group will respond as soon as possible however they may not be able to get to you for hours or even days.

You can help the SES.

Before you call the SES, consider what you can do to help yourself.

For example, place a bucket under the leak, move furniture and belongings to avoid damage, or clear debris from your gutter or downpipe so excess water can flow away.

If you no longer require emergency assistance, call 132 500 quoting your reference number to cancel the request.

This helps free up SES crews to help others in need.

For all life-threatening emergencies, call Triple Zero (000).



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